

# The FLYER

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 / Student-run newspaper

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## ABOUT

The Flyer is Salisbury University's student newspaper-composed by students for students. The organization was established in 1973 to keep to SU community informed and entertained.

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The Flyer strives for accuracy and corrects its errors immediately. If you believe a factual error has been printed, feel free to contact the staff. Thank you.

Sophomore Riley Keener admits the changes have been draining psychologically and that she still prefers in-person instruction despite the new policies.

"I do love the in-person classes, even if I have to wear a mask ... [because] I feel like you are more engaged, whereas I can get too comfortable on Zoom and lose focus," Keener said.

Professors across the university agree that connecting with students has been the toughest obstacle during the pandemic, which has forced them to find creative ways to teach in this new normal.

"The biggest challenges have been student engagement and making sure that students are getting the same quality of education, which has been difficult by switching between Zoom and in-person formats," said Susannah Taylor, lecturer of fitness and wellness. "It can be difficult connecting with students when you don't see them multiple times in-person each week, so [instructors] have to be strategic with different methods, like using Kahoot and breakout rooms or meeting outside the classroom, that might be more effective in delivering the content."

Another drastic shift took place in on-campus residence life, with each resident allowed just one on-campus guest, barring any family members, off-campus students or members of

## NEWS

### How SU survived a COVID-19 fall semester

By JAKOB TODD / News editor

While Salisbury University has survived in-person instruction longer than many institutions across the state of Maryland, the fight against COVID-19 has been an ever-changing journey for the entire campus community.

After welcoming students back to campus in the first week of September, chaos erupted immediately with a series of coronavirus-related crises.

Within the first week of classes, President of Salisbury University Dr. Charles Wight announced a mandatory round of Labor Day COVID-19 testing for the entire campus community after an 18.3% positivity rate was found on Sept. 1 tests, putting the university's in-person operations in jeopardy of a potential shutdown just five days into the semester.

367 positive tests were then captured over three days of testing, with many university members forced to leave campus and return home or stay in isolation areas in Dogwood Village to quarantine.

SU then overhauled its entire COVID-19 testing process to curb wait times after facing criticism for non-socially distanced lines, as well as mandating negative tests on file every 30 days for university members to retain access to campus facilities.

The campus' positivity rate steadily dropped since reaching a weekly height of 6.2% positivity, remaining at or below 2% since late September, according to SU's coronavirus dashboard.

Despite the various challenges faced throughout the fall semester, Wight touted the university as one of the most successful institutions in the state in adjusting to the pandemic.

"SU maintains the highest level of face-to-face and hybrid instructions in the entire University System of Maryland," Wight said. "I know it hasn't been easy, but it's important for your education and your future."

SU has offered courses in all modalities — in-person, virtual and hybrid formats — throughout the entire semester, with plans to continue the combination in the spring.

But face-to-face instruction has seen dramatic changes compared to years past, as social distancing and mask-wearing guidelines now dictate on-campus life.



SU's COVID-19 testing protocols were overhauled following an outbreak of the virus early in the semester (photo courtesy of Salisbury University Public Relations Office).

outside universities from visiting SU residence halls.

For Nanticoke Hall resident Kyla Diggs, like many freshmen, social distancing has been the only version of the college experience she knows.

"What's bothered me most was having to stick with the room arrangement given to me because, even though it's socially distanced, it's made things like my dresser and drawers not even be able to open fully because they hit my desk," Diggs said. "But overall, I've had a pretty pleasant experience."

The university's dining services were also significantly impacted by COVID-19, as touchless swipe-in entry to the Commons dining hall was added, self-order kiosks were installed and self-service stations were required to be staffed by employees.

As with all other SU facilities, the dining hall was reorganized to accommodate social distancing and mask-wearing was enforced when individuals were not eating.

Social distancing was made easier with a significant portion of SU students opting for all-virtual class schedules rather than return to campus, making half-filled parking lots and an empty Red Square commonplace.

In a step toward normalcy, SU did see the return of sports midway through the semester.

The university's fall sports teams resumed limited practices Oct. 1, marking the first time student athletes could take the field since all fall sports activities were suspended by the Capital Athletic Conference July 21. Fall and spring sports are all slated to compete during the spring 2021 semester.

While SU determined a "regular" Thanksgiving break would still be appropriate this fall, some students have opted to stay on campus and not return home to their families, primarily due to coronavirus concerns.

These students will be moved into their own individual rooms in Dogwood Village or Sea Gull Square with residence halls locked during holiday breaks, according to Vice President of Student Affairs Dane Foust.

Though SU's positivity rate has remained low since early September, the campus still faces great uncertainty in the coming months. Wight said that every item on the university's calendar remains subject to change for the foreseeable future as potential challenges posed by the virus continue to surface and threaten SU's levels of operation.

Thus far, SU has already announced an all-virtual commencement ceremony for the class of 2020 in December and an abbreviated spring break of two days as precautions for the pandemic.

## SU spring break to last 2 days

By ALLISON GUY and JAKOB TODD / Editor-in-chief and News editor

As COVID-19 continues to affect the daily lives of Salisbury University's students, faculty and staff, the university has chosen to shorten spring break for Spring Semester 2021 into a mini-break of two days.

"Although a normal, full-week spring break would give everyone a much-needed break, there are serious health concerns associated with campus community members leaving Salisbury ... A compromise is a mini-break of two days that would provide a few days of downtime," according to an email released on Oct. 29 from The President's Office.

The mini-break will be on Monday, March 15 and Tuesday, March 16, and post-break COVID-19 testing is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, March 17.

In the past, campus community members have enjoyed a week-long spring break in the month of March, though such a break during the pandemic threatened the university's trend of recently low virus levels, with just 0.8% positivity shown over the month of October, according to SU's coronavirus dashboard.

Dozens of colleges across the nation have already begun canceling their respective spring break plans entirely, University of Florida, Ohio State University and University of Tennessee among them, each citing potential outbreak concerns as motivation for canceling. Vice President of Student Affairs Dane Foust previously stated that SU administration had consulted with various campus groups for input on the best course of action for spring break, including the university's Student Government Association.

Adding a few longer weekend breaks to the semester to compensate for the absence of a week-long break was among the suggestions posed by the SGA, per Diane Kalita, the organization's chief of staff.

Kalita said administrators conveyed to the SGA that if spring break were to be eliminated completely, including any form of abbreviated version, the spring semester would simply begin a week later than originally planned to account for instructional days made-up by removing the break.

In turn, the organization presented a potential solution of still beginning the semester on time and then using those five made-up "days off" periodically throughout the spring schedule. Both options were proposed by the SGA with students' mental health in mind, believing it was necessary for students to have time to recover from their spring class workloads if a week-long spring break would not be feasible due to coronavirus testing concerns.

As a result of classes being held during the week of spring break, the spring semester will conclude three days earlier while still starting on its originally scheduled date of Monday, Jan. 25.

The email also stated that for the spring semester, approximately 45% of SU's classes will be online or remote, while approximately 55% of classes will be taught face-to-face or in a hybrid manner. However, course modalities are contingent on the state of the pandemic.

"Although we hope to not have any changes to modalities as currently listed in GullNet, course modality may be modified if campus operations change (for example, if public health considerations require limiting access to campus) or if other factors necessitate changes," the email read.

SU has also scheduled its graduation ceremonies for next semester.

"At this point, Commencement exercises for next semester are planned for Friday — Saturday, May 14 and 15, but again, are contingent upon public health considerations next spring," according to The President's Office.

For the spring semester, SU's current health precautions will remain in place.

"Because it looks like the pandemic will follow us into 2021, mandatory testing and current campus policies regarding face mask use, physical distancing, IDs and visitor registration will continue into the spring semester," the email included.



The shortened break is intended to limit travel away from campus (photo courtesy of ABC News).

## Campus group calls for student activity director's termination after alleged racial slur

By ALLISON GUY / Editor-in-chief



The alleged incident occurred at the university's NPHC's Visibility Day event (staff photo by Ben Lausch).

**WANT TO WRITE FOR NEWS?**  
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**FOR INFORMATION**  
**jtodd7@gulls.salisbury.edu**

Salisbury University's National Pan-Hellenic Council is calling for the university to terminate Tricia Garvey Smith, director of the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership, from her position after she allegedly used a racial slur at one of the NPHC's events.

According to an Oct. 20 press release from SU's NPHC, the organization hosted a "Visibility Day" event on Sept. 25 where Garvey Smith allegedly used a racial slur while speaking to two students during the event, one of whom was a student leader, "to express her disapproval for the music that was playing."

"At this event, I asked a student leader to stop playing music with inappropriate lyrics, including the 'F' word and the 'N' word. In doing so, I quoted those words from the songs," Garvey Smith said in an email sent to all SU students. "Garvey-Smith claims to have used the word to reference lyrics in songs that had been playing, yet there were no songs that used the 'N' word ending with the hard 'er,'" according to the NPHC's press release.

Following the incident, Garvey Smith met via Zoom with the students involved, who stated they wanted her to release a public apology to all SU students.

Garvey Smith later apologized at a recent Student Government Association forum, sent an email apology to the students who attended the Visibility Day event and then sent an email apology to all SU students.

After the incident occurred at Visibility Day, the NPHC's advisor filed a complaint with SU's Office of Institutional Equity, but the office dismissed the complaint, according to the NPHC's press release. Members of the NPHC then went on to file individual claims.

"After meetings with the Office of Institutional Equity, many NPHC members feel as though Salisbury University is not treating this matter with the severity it should, and [have] been informed that the situation as a whole does not meet the 'minimum threshold' to be considered

## Student activities director's alleged racial slur continued ...

as discrimination," the NPHC's press release read.

A recent Student Affairs Group email relayed that while the incident did not meet the discrimination threshold, "the concerns were determined to be significant enough for immediate referral to the offices of Student Affairs and Human Resources" and that "appropriate action has been taken with regard to the staff member involved."

Exact disciplinary actions were not specified.

The press release also demands that Garvey Smith "be terminated from her position in light of her racist remarks, and her decision to intentionally use a word that everyone knows has a history rooted in slavery, oppression and discrimination."

"I am hopeful that my work with students can speak for itself and that students and colleagues will not judge me solely on this moment in time when, out of disgust of hearing the lyrics and frustration that the students continued to play such lyrics, I made a poor decision and repeated the word," Garvey Smith said in a statement.

"I hope and pray that just one student of color I worked with as the CSIL point of contact remembers that I helped them with their organization or with their event planning. I hope and pray that all students see me for who I am."

## SU facing backlash over shortened spring break

By JAKOB TODD/News editor

Since announcing that spring break would be cut from a full week to just two days next semester, Salisbury University administration has faced intense criticism and scrutiny from its student body regarding the change.

In a recent email to the campus community, SU's President's Office alerted students, staff and faculty of the adjusted Spring 2021 Semester calendar, including an abbreviated two-day spring break from March 15-16, to help prevent potential spread of COVID-19.

The email stated that there are, "serious health concerns associated with campus community members leaving Salisbury, visiting areas where the risk of contracting COVID-19 is higher and potentially bringing it back to campus," as causes for shortening the break to less than half.

Despite the "mini-break compromise," some SU students are sharply opposed to the change and believe it will result in more harm than good for the campus.

"It's going to [impact] mental health greatly because students need time to relax and blow off steam ... [and two] days can't achieve that," said underclassman River Myer.

How the shortened break may negatively influence students' performance in the classroom is a recurring concern among students, with Emily Marshall, a sophomore biology major, agreeing that the new schedule may not be best for long-term student success.

"Breaks are important for [students'] ability to perform well in classes," Marshall said. "Shortening our spring break will ultimately lead to less productivity and higher stress levels."

Alyssa Collier, a member of the university's track team, is particularly concerned with the indirect consequences posed for SU student-athletes with classes now scheduled during the second half of the week.

"Some sports teams travel to games or meets during spring break, so [student-athletes] might miss more class or not be able to go home to see family during spring break this year, provided that we have a season."

SU's fall and spring sports teams are all still currently scheduled to compete during the 2021 Spring Semester after postponements were made in the fall due to the ongoing pandemic.

Students have also expressed doubts over the effectiveness of a shortened break limiting potential travel and gatherings away from campus, with concerns still growing over heightened coronavirus levels upon the students' return.

"It is very disappointing that we don't get a full spring break and only two days because of the stress COVID-19 gives students," said junior Chloe Adam. "Plus, I think college students will get together and party either way, so it will only make things worse for the campus in the end."

Early childhood education major Madison Abbott furthered the idea that students will invariably leave campus, stating that "students aren't going to care whether the break is two days or a full week, they're still going to go home because they don't like being away from family for an entire semester." Though classes will be held on days that would otherwise normally be occupied by spring break, the spring semester will still proceed with its originally scheduled start date of Jan. 25, according to the email.

SU administration met with shared governance groups, including the university's Student Government Association, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and Graduate Student Council, for input on how to best adjust the spring schedule over the past few weeks.

To view all the scheduling changes made thus far to the spring semester calendar, visit the SU Registrar's calendar page.



Students are skeptical of how a shortened spring break may ultimately impact the campus (photo courtesy of Sun Sentinel).

## Where to find cultural diversity courses for next semester

By JAKOB TODD / News editor

As Salisbury University students begin registering for spring semester classes, SU's Healing Action group is highlighting an area often overlooked in the course selection process: diversity and inclusion.

The group recently unveiled the new Diversity and Inclusion Resources for Curricula Library Guide in hopes of assisting students in identifying potential courses across campus related to themes of inclusivity.

The Healing Action group requested in the fall that all SU faculty submit any course offerings for the upcoming Spring and Fall 2021 semesters that "relate to themes of diversity and inclusion, particularly with regard to marginalized populations, histories of representation and changing cultural politics," according to the guide.

The Fulton School of Liberal Arts currently leads all other SU academic schools in submissions with nearly 50 eligible courses in a variety of disciplines, including art, environmental science, music and psychology, among others.

The communication department offers the most courses listed in the Fulton School with nine, followed by the English and history departments, each offering seven.

The College of Health and Human Services and the Seidel School of Education also provide courses related to diversity and inclusion alongside their Fulton counterpart, each currently offering two.

Dr. Elsie Walker, professor of cinema studies at SU and an active faculty member of the Healing Action group, worked alongside Angeline Prichard, the SU Libraries diversity and inclusion coordinator and fellow group member, to compose the guide.

Article continued on page 4 ...

## Cultural diversity continued ...

Walker has tremendous faith in the potential benefits of the guide for the upcoming semesters.

"I think it's beneficial for students to know that there are many places on campus where they can have these important conversations about diversity and inclusion that go beyond the scope of a single townhall or workshop ... especially as we strive to make our nation more genuinely inclusive."

Walker will be teaching an international cinema course in the spring, featured on the guide under the English subsection, and is very excited to begin dialogues with students on a variety of cultures.

"I feel that there are many films that can teach us about how to engage more compassionately, more humanely, more thoughtfully and imaginatively with the struggles that people different from us face," Walker said.

Danitz Roman, deputy chair of the SU Student Government Diversity and Inclusion Committee, is very excited for students taking these courses, as they "will have the opportunity to learn how to interact and connect with students from different backgrounds ... I would encourage [all] students to take diversity and inclusion courses."

Roman continued, citing that a course involving themes of diversity and inclusion can be "a great opportunity to connect with other students who have the same interests and learn a lot about different cultures."

Courses are organized on the guide by academic school and department for convenience and will be updated as future submissions are received.



Spring semester courses are available in-person, fully online and in hybrid formats (photo courtesy of Inside Higher Ed).

Faculty members planning to teach a course over the next academic year that meets the diversity and inclusion criteria are encouraged to contact both Walker, [emwalker@salisbury.edu](mailto:emwalker@salisbury.edu), and Prichard, [arprichard@salisbury.edu](mailto:arprichard@salisbury.edu), with the course's code, title, semester offered, instructor and how the class applies to diversity and inclusion.

Overall, Walker is very hopeful for the future of the campus community.

"If you can adopt a curious mindset and try to get into a genuinely open-minded space within yourself ... I think it can be very beautiful because you begin to understand the smallness of your position in relation to these massive infrastructural truths, and, with a full heart, hopefully become part of moving things forward."

To view the guide, visit <https://libraryguides.salisbury.edu/c.php?g=903753&p=7801512>.

## Johnston finishes as finalist for NCAA Woman of the Year

By NICK LEWIS / Sports editor

Arielle Johnston earned many awards in her four years playing for Salisbury University's field hockey team.

In addition to winning the 2019 Capital Athletic Conference Player of the Year award and numerous honors for her performance on the field, Johnston spent a lot of time during her four years giving back to the community off the field.

This time went toward her role as a classroom aide in an after-school program at the Epoch Dream Center as well as volunteering at the Hope and Life Outreach homeless shelter. Johnston also participated in a service trip to Uganda with Reaction Tour, a Christian outreach group, in January of 2019.

Johnston was selected as one of 605 nominees for the 2020 NCAA Woman of the Year award. On Oct. 15, she was named one of nine finalists for the honor.

The NCAA Woman of the Year award honors college athletes that excel in athletics, academics, community service and leadership. Johnston was one of three Division III athletes to be named a finalist for the award.

Q: What was your initial reaction to being nominated for the award?

A: When they announced the group of 30, I went in and saw them all and thought 'Wow, these are some amazing women and I'm in there?' ... In my mind it's hilarious, but the more that I have thought about it, the more I realized it is a huge honor and it's actually really cool to even be in the same category as all these other women.

Q: What are some of your favorite memories from your volunteer work?

A: There are definitely special memories for each of them. To sum it up, the thing that stood out to me the most was the relationship aspect.

In those opportunities, I got to build relationships with people of different backgrounds. The takeaway for me and what I realized about myself through them was that I like mentoring, I like building relationships with people and being there as a support.

Q: What got you into working with these organizations?

A: Initially, what drove that start was that I had applied for a scholarship, and it was a volunteer-based organization. When I got it, I decided I was going to keep that promise and volunteer more, it all started with that. I just really enjoy serving and loving on people, so it grew from there. When I heard about Reaction Tour, when I read their mission statement and what their

purpose was, I realized that it was on my heart and exactly what I wanted to do, so I definitely wanted to be a part of that ... For, the reason I got into volunteer work is that it interests me, and I like doing it, it's really just enjoyable for me.

Q: How has your faith played a role in your decision to volunteer?

A: For me, I love the Lord and I want to reflect that. It plays a role in me wanting to love people and love them in actions, not in words. It's really about showing up because you said you were going to and you made that commitment, whether you made it to yourself or someone else. Sometimes it's just talked about but not lived out, so a huge conviction on my heart is to live it out and do it all in action. I just want to love people, because He loves me so much and I want to give that and let people know how loved they are.

Q: Why do you recommend these opportunities to others?



Arielle Johnston takes on a Tufts defender in the 2018 NCAA Tournament (staff photo by Marshall Haas).

A: For one, I think it gives you a different perspective into the lives of people from different backgrounds. People in general don't tend to go and find people that don't look like them or that come from different backgrounds, and you miss out on an opportunity to meet so many amazing people with different stories and to have a better appreciation and understanding for people. You really don't know peoples' stories until you go out and see them and talk to them. Whatever you choose to do volunteering-wise, because there's so many different opportunities, it gives you the chance to see life through a different lens. I definitely encourage that for everyone.

# Editorial



## SU Dance Company inspires activism

By OLIVIA BALLMANN /

Editorial editor

If you attended The SU Dance Company's virtual fall recital last weekend, you were no doubt blown away by the passion, creativity and talent of all students involved.

The SU Dance Company consists of incredible student dancers and choreographers who've taken dance courses throughout the Fall 2020 semester.

Under the direction of artistic director Helen Myers, SU dance students spent the semester perfecting dances that illustrated social issues students were passionate about.

This was in correlation with the recital's theme and title: "Socially Conscious; Socially Distanced."

At the beginning of the performance, viewers were introduced to dancers and choreographers through a series of short videos, each containing social issues students wished to portray through their performances.

Dances within the recital were filled with passion, reflecting on a multitude of social issues ranging from mental health, to the COVID-19 pandemic, to racism.

The dances relayed powerful messages, messages which roamed the minds of viewers long after the performances were over.

The recital consisted of live and pre-recorded dances that could be viewed virtually.

During live performances, the stage was lit with the inspiration and creativity of SU students, and you could instantly tell each dancer genuinely enjoyed expressing themselves through dance.

Each performance was an opportunity, an opportunity to create change and bring awareness to important, prevalent issues in our world today which is incredibly admirable.

Bryette Washington, a junior majoring in theatre production, demonstrated her talents as a student choreographer.

Washington, with the help of dancer Kamryn Tross, created a dance called, "Beauty Within," which focused on empowering African American women.

"I really wanted it to get the audience's attention, especially women of color, African American women. Because even still, in today's society, black women are criticized by how dark their skin is. So, I wanted it [the dance] to be



Kate Carpenter performing *Overexposed*, choreographed by Jillian Crosby (staff photo by Jillian Crosby).

something to uplift women of color, especially black women," Washington reflected.

The dance was choreographed to spoken poetry by Amaia McNeil, and the choreography was beautifully synchronized to the poem's rhythm.

Washington and Tross not only created a beautiful dance but delivered an inspirational message to the audience that was truly memorable.

Jillian Crosby, a junior interdisciplinary study major in dance and marketing management, is another member of the SU Dance Company who greatly contributed to the recital's success.

Crosby had choreographed a dance for Kate Carpenter called "Overexposed." The dance focused on the importance of mental health awareness.

Crosby's choreography was particularly interesting as gym chalk was used to create visual effects when combined with colorful stage lighting.

"The chalk was supposed to represent the mental illness and how it can spread throughout someone's body," Crosby explained.

By tossing the chalk into the air, vivid clouds of color would burst above Carpenter as she danced, further emphasizing symbols and phrases spoken throughout the dance.

Crosby herself wrote, spoke and added music for Carpenter to dance to.

"I wrote it and spoke it myself — so it was

very personal for me."

The talent and effort displayed throughout the recital was very impressive, especially considering the challenge of airing a recital during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In preparation for the recital, Crosby recalled the extensive measures dancers followed to keep themselves and each other safe:

"We have air filters in the room, and we have to dance with masks on which is incredibly hard. We had to take care of and clean our studio every time we used it. Disinfect everything. There's a lot of new rules, and we could only dance a half an hour and then we would have to go outside for 15 minutes before we could come back in again."

These precautions were followed throughout the semester, even during the recital.

"Between each live dance, we had to disinfect the stage, so we could dance ... It was a little bit of a rush, but we were just lucky we got to dance," Crosby added.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, SU Dance Company members delivered a performance of the highest quality.

Soloists encompassed emotions of passion and forward thinking.

However, what was most impressive was the recital's finale, a pre-recorded group dance called "Take Two Knees."

A beautifully eerie clarinet solo, performed by Anthony McGill, set the tone for a dance of reflection.

Socially distanced dancers entered the camera frame, wearing identical masks and dresses, dancing in unison.

The final movement of the dance consisted of each dancer taking two knees which, according to Crosby, symbolized peaceful protests, speaking out against racism.

The tone, mood and execution of the piece was incredibly moving, and I was touched to see such passionate students portray an issue that is so relevant and important to our generation.

The SU Dance company has truly created a beautiful collection of art that was not only engaging but inspirational.



Kamryn Tross performing *Beauty Within*, choreographed by Bryette Washington (staff photo by Jillian Crosby).

## Diversity and inclusion requirement fails again?

By DORIEN ROGERS/Staff writer

On Oct. 27, Salisbury University faculty failed to make quorum by being present at an all faculty vote on advancing a diversity and inclusion general education requirement.

This is what I believe to be one of the most pivotal moments in our university's history, as only 48% of the faculty participated in the Zoom meeting's virtual vote Tuesday, Oct. 27 at 3:30 p.m. This is after the original motion, brought forth by Dr. April Logan, was tabled, discarded and ultimately failed within the faculty senate.

This motion was designed to begin the process of allowing an all faculty vote for a diversity and inclusion general education requirement.

A faculty led petition had pressured the Salisbury University Faculty Senate to bring back the motion to start plans for a separate, yet required, diversity and inclusion general education requirement.

However, as I stated earlier, this revised motion did not pass, as more than half of SU's faculty body was absent during the virtual referendum, which prevented them from meeting quorum.

How will the proposal for general education reform be adjusted and enforced if faculty won't even show up to help bring these needed changes?

What's even more shocking is the lack of communication between the faculty leadership and SU students.

Faculty senate leaders have yet to notify the campus community on what's transpired with the diversity and inclusion general education requirement.

Although the provost mentioned this at the September diversity town hall, the lack of initiative from the faculty senate has illustrated a theme of not desiring a separate yet required diversity and inclusion general education requirement. Even as this motion was on the floor of the Faculty Senate, there were no known attempts by the Faculty Senate leadership to announce this motion and its fate to the entire campus community.

It becomes more and more evident that diversity and inclusion is not desired in the classroom. As a student at Salisbury University, the word disappointed becomes more and more euphemistic due to the institution's lack of initiative and action.

Even after a series of vandalisms that has claimed to "reflect the love and support at SU from the community," we have yet to see any conscious changes at SU, even with the hiring of Chief Diversity Officer Joan Williams.

In fact, it seems we've moved backwards instead of forwards.

As previously stated, I believe communication could be much improved between students and other campus governance.

SU students have lost Diversity and Inclusion Specialist Annette Johnson due to claims of COVID-19-related budgetary cuts.

To better understand these COVID-19-related budget cuts, I personally requested the budget expenditures to see where the money for Multicultural Student Services and Cultural Affairs was going this year.

This information was requested verbally in several joint meetings as well as through two emails sent Oct. 5 at 1:57 p.m. and a follow-up Oct. 23 at 1:54 p.m.

After having sent multiple emails in addition to multiple verbal conversations, I ultimately filed a Maryland Public Information Act, which legally requests public documents.

Williams later responded Nov. 2 in an email, stating she was aware of the PIA request; she ultimately referred me to answers within the PIA request, which I have yet to receive.

This is an example of a lack of communication and accountability which, unfortunately, we've seen before.

In addition to communication, the removal of



Holloway Hall (staff photo by Ben Lausch).

staff positions due to various reasons has been problematic as well.

The position of Multicultural Student Services director, which leads the office to help marginalized students thrive as students at SU, has not been fulfilled, which consequently hinders the SU community's ability to meet the objectives of an inclusive campus community.

The reason for this? The CDO has provided various answers, ranging from waiting to hear from the student community to waiting for the release of the campus climate study.

Ultimately, the CDO confirmed at the Sept. 23 town hall that the position was cut alongside the director of Cultural Affairs.

Additionally, the tasks of the director of Multicultural Student Services will be placed on the program coordinator of Multicultural Student Services, which seems problematic, as one person is doing the job of two.

Despite SU students' desire to have Mr. Richard Potter, program coordinator of Multicultural Student Services, be appointed as the interim director of Multicultural Student Services due to his hard work and determination, it appears to be dismissed by the CDO.

With all these moving parts, one thing is clear — Salisbury University is not consciously trying to promote diversity and inclusion.

Hands should be washed often with soap and water or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Even with clean hands, avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth.

Students should also do their best to get tested before and after traveling. Tests are not 100% accurate according to the FDA, but they are reliable indicators of whether COVID has been contracted.

If a test comes back positive, a student should make sure to self-isolate and to not come to campus. SU's health line should be contacted via email for further instructions (campushealth@salisbury.edu).

When the Maryland COVID contact tracing center reaches out, the information an infected individual provides should be as accurate and detailed as possible.

The center will be reaching out to those who have been in contact with an infected student and could have contracted COVID themselves.

If a test comes back negative, CDC guidelines and SU's COVID-19 rules should continue to be regarded. Negative results do not guarantee the absence of the virus.

Salisbury Maryland is seeing a dangerous increase in COVID. While SU has instituted a host of precautions, the virus and its associated risks will not be disappearing anytime soon.

Without a compelling reason, students should not travel home for the safety of themselves, their families and their fellow SU community members.

If travelling home is a necessity, students should be extra cautious and follow guidelines established by the CDC.

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## Zoom: the ultimate education tool

By OLIVIA BALLMANN / Editorial editor

Zoom — it's the ultimate education tool responsible for the humiliation, frustration and demise of all who use it.

Although many can attest to the fact Zoom has its "occasional" flaws, no one can deny we're all certainly learning a lot — mainly about ourselves and each other.

We've learned to face our insecurities — or at least, we've certainly gotten more comfortable demonstrating them.

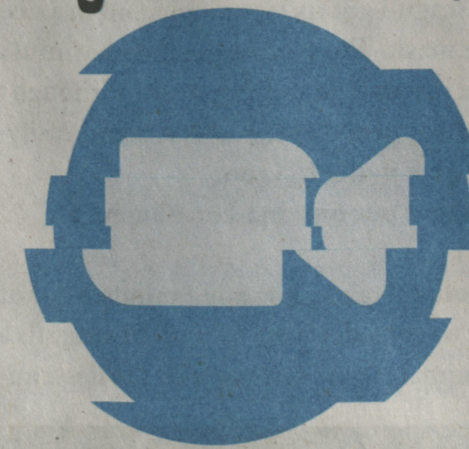
If you've used Zoom at all this semester, it's likely you've learned a series of unnecessary, yet somehow almost involuntary gestures to cover up your deepest insecurities.

Maybe you've mastered the half-a-second hair flip, readjusting your hair every half a second which is particularly important when you're styling your two-day-old sweatpants or pajamas.

Or, perhaps you've mastered the long and dramatic nose scratch, where you make it overly obvious that your nose is itchy as to allure people away from any idea or notion that you're picking your nose.

More importantly, Zoom provides what can only be described as a cinematic learning experience.

ZOOM UNIVERSITY



Staff graphic by Michael Cotterino

Various random cats can be seen hopping onto keyboards, making brief cameos in the backgrounds of many unsuspecting students and professors.

We're also introduced to what is known as "the unsuspecting roommate who had no idea you were in class but, once aware, continues to sing and dance in the background of your Zoom screen anyway."

The cinematic learning experience is only am-

## How effective is the SU-Mobile app really?

By LAURA AMRHEIN / Staff writer

Eat breakfast, pack up your books, grab your backpack and head out the door to campus. Oh, and don't forget to do the COVID-19 Salisbury University screening app before you go!

Since the official reopening of Salisbury University's campus, SU students have been required to complete a daily self-assessment screening for COVID-19.

The screening can be completed through the SU-Mobile app, a web portal and even in-person at specific locations throughout campus. Although screening is certainly a good idea, the reality of the app's effectiveness is unsuccessful for several reasons.

For one, the app's purpose to screen students before entering SU buildings or classroom is not fulfilled, as the use of the app is not enforced. Although it seemed as though the SU-Mobile app would play a vital role in the re-opening of SU's campus, using the app hasn't actually been enforced around campus.

Several students have stated they have forgotten to complete the app's daily screening process before class and have had no issues attending their classes.

Students' screening status is not consistently checked in all academic buildings, and it doesn't appear all professors check their students' statuses before the beginning of class either.

Thus, there isn't much motivation to complete the app's time-consuming screening process, which can be particularly annoying considering the additional DUO sign in process.

Screening costs students additional time, but in truth, most students probably forget to complete the app's screening on a consistent daily basis even with daily email reminders sent every day around 5 a.m.

Many students forget to check their email and therefore don't see the reminder, or just ignore it and move on with their day.

"I feel that it [the email] gets overlooked because how many students actually check their emails that often to use the daily email as a reminder? Or [the students] proceed to ignore it anyway," junior Kaitlyn Rother stated.

Even if students do remember to do the app, and care enough to do it, the odds of the app accurately screening for COVID seems unlikely.

The SU-Mobile app has basic questions to identify COVID-19 symptoms, such as whether a student has had a fever over 101.4 degrees, new loss of taste or smell or chills.

There are many other symptoms included in the SU-Mobile app's screening questionnaire as well, such as cough, fatigue, muscle ache, body ache, shortness of breath and sore throat which are general symptoms that

ARE YOU CLEARED?



Staff graphic by Michael Cotterino

honestly could be allergies, a common cold, the flu or a plethora of other causes.

Because some of the symptoms listed on the app are so general, it is highly unlikely that students are going to report they have COVID-19 symptoms on the app.

For example, the SU-Mobile app contains a screening question about fatigue, but what college student isn't at least a bit tired or fatigued every day?

Students are likely to select no for all of the questions rather than risk being unable to enter campus for the day for something that could be minor.

"Some of the questions are kind of dumb because they are usually the result of non-COVID related things. For example, congestion or runny nose equals allergies, loose stool equals any number of digestive issues [and] aching muscles equals simple soreness," junior Aaron Stiegler stated.

While the app was a good idea in theory for a COVID-19 safety protocol, it has not been the most effective in keeping potential COVID-19 symptomatic students off campus.

Many students are likely to select "no" to the questions so they can attend class and enter on-campus buildings, especially if they have what appears to be "just a sniffle."

Instead, SU should have students take their temperatures upon arrival to class or building entrances.

While it wouldn't catch everyone who is sick, it would prevent someone with a fever from lying on the questionnaire and showing up to class anyway.

## Is returning home on the weekends really the best idea?

By JACOB BEAVER / Staff writer



SU tunnel leading to student parking lot, the tunnel many students take to access their cars to go home (staff photo by Ben Lausch).

According to Salisbury University's Institutional Information, 86% of those enrolled in the Fall 2019 Semester were from Maryland, as it was their home state.

This means over three-quarters of SU's students were within reasonable driving distance to visit their homes on weekends.

With the school's home county of Wicomico County being one of Maryland's top 10 counties affected by COVID-19, according to the Maryland Department of Health, is it safe for students who attend campus to travel home?

The Maryland Department of Health states that COVID-19 can be spread via people in close contact with one another.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this is due to respiratory droplets from the coughing, sneezing or talking of infected individuals; another form of exposure, though not significant, is through touching a surface or object with the virus on it.

Travelling has already been determined by the CDC to increase the chances of both catching and spreading COVID-19.

Knowing this, how should a student decide whether to go home for the weekend?

First, the university community's level of infection should be considered.

Salisbury, Maryland is a COVID hotspot, and the city has recently instituted new restrictions after an increase in cases within Wicomico County, according to an article written by Sara Ash and Kyleigh Panetta.

Where someone travels can also have a large impact on the decision to return home. Is a student's home county or city a high-risk area as well?

Next, those being visited should be carefully evaluated.

Is anyone in the family at risk due to immune-compromising diseases? Who would be put at risk if an SU resident unknowingly contracts COVID before arriving home?

Finally, what is the risk presented to Sea Gulls and the school community as a whole?

If a student were to catch the virus while at home, a variety of people he or she interacts with on campus could be infected.

This includes roommates, classmates, professors, coworkers and other friends and loved ones at SU.

But what if travelling is necessary? Situations may arise in which someone may be strongly compelled to head home.

What should students do before and after travelling?

First, they should take precautions provided by the CDC. Wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth when around others.

While at home, close contact should be avoided with at least six feet between the student and others.

Especially avoid those who are exhibiting any signs of illness, COVID or other sicknesses.

## Are masks harmful?

By SUMMER SHAPER /  
Staff writer

Face masks are extremely important to prevent the spread of COVID-19; however, they are contributing to another global crisis: pollution. Disposable masks are not recyclable, and if the use of these masks continues, they're likely to add to our already overwhelmingly cluttered landfills.

This has detrimentally impacted our environment.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, stray disposable masks on the ground are becoming more and more common.

Personally, I've even noticed many masks on SU's campus and that is not okay!

We are a campus that prides itself on sustainability. There shouldn't be any litter on our campus, especially not masks.

Masks are also making their way to our oceans.

Disposable face masks contain plastic which takes an exceptionally long time to break down, and even after doing so, will add to the microplastic pollution in the ocean.

Additionally, microplastics can cause a lot of harm to animals that ingest them.

Animals can easily find themselves tangled in masks or mistake them masks for food. According to an article from The New York Post, a seagull got its legs tangled up in a disposable mask. The was particularly harmful as the bird was unable to fly or walk. Although this incident happened in the UK, it could easily happen here in the U.S too.

Think about our own mascot, Sammy the Seagull!

We should all take a few more minutes out of our day to consider ways to prevent seagulls and other animals from dealing with the determi-

nantal consequences of our actions.

So, what can you do?

Everyone on campus is required to wear masks in classes, buildings and groups, and they should.

However, switching to reusable cloth face masks is the best option for students.

Although reusable face masks can be more expensive, it is only a one-time price instead of having to continue to buy disposable face masks.

Just throw them in the washing machine with your other laundry! You can even make your own masks with the help of online tutorials. Reusable face masks should have a minimum of two layers and be made from washable, breathable fabric, according to the CDC.

You can also add a filter inside of most reusable masks, so it can be even more effective.

The CDC also recommends that surgical masks (disposable masks) should only be used in work settings. Thus, the reusable face coverings are great options for students.

However, if you do not have access to using reusable face masks or are required to use them for work, please make sure to throw your used masks into the trash where they belong.

We all have been having a difficult time during this pandemic, but we need to think a little more about how the earth is affected by it too.

We need to stay safe, but we also need to remember to keep our planet safe as well!



One of many disposable masks found littering SU area (staff photo by Summer Shaper).

## Gull Life

### Ways to improve your mental health at Salisbury University

By STEPHANIE RIVERA / Gull Life editor

With the end of the semester approaching, the seemingly never-ending COVID-19 pandemic and the presidential election, one can find themselves experiencing increasing mental deficits. The cumulation of stressors that are occurring can cause any college student to find themselves lost in the mix, but Salisbury University is still here to provide a variety of mental health services.

The biggest question surrounding the mental health services on campus is the execution of therapy sessions; with the occurrence of COVID-19 and social distancing standards in place, face-to-face therapy sessions seem improbable. However, Salisbury University Student Counseling Services' counselors have implemented a multitude of new services to help navigate students through this unknown terrain.

Training Coordinator and Counselor within the University Student Counseling Services Dawn Harner discussed the changes within the organization; "We are using telehealth services for our therapy sessions, in which the student has the option to do the session by phone call or Zoom video conferencing."

Due to COVID-19, the regular sessions of group therapy are not assessable. However, the counseling center has formulated a variety of group sessions. These weekly sessions range from support groups such as Coping with COVID to Resiliency Groups sessions. Through participation within the Resiliency Group, you have the ability to participate in support groups that implement meditation practices that are aimed to improve mood, decrease anxiety, enhance focus and have various mental and physical benefits for people overall. These Zoom programs consist of six hour-long weekly group sessions starting with the Serenity Group on Mondays at 1 p.m., followed by the Resiliency Group, which is targeted to support people of color on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. Then on



Dawn Harner, training coordinator/counselor of the counseling center (photo courtesy of university page).

Wednesdays at 11 a.m., mindfulness meditation practices hold sessions of Consciousness Group, Thursdays at 2 p.m. consist of a Compassion Group and lastly you can end your week through group sessions of the Calm Group on Fridays at 2 p.m.

The Counseling Center has additionally implemented Therapy Assistance Online, or TAO, which provides personalized online mobile tools to conquer struggles, ranging from general stressors resulting from anxiety to addiction assistance.

"This online tool can be self-help guided or alongside therapy to provide additional ways to compliment the therapy sessions that they [students] are doing with a counselor. There is a lot of online tools within TAO, and students can register using their Salisbury email address through the link on our homepage," Harner boasted regarding the new-age system.

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## Mental health continued ...

If you are one of the many students who does not want to incorporate therapy sessions within their lives, TAO provides an outlet for implementing mental health provisions within your daily life and on your own terms.

Another new addition to the multitude of services provided by the counseling center is the staff addition of a psychiatrist, Dr. Sonia Tyutyulkova. In addition to working at the Johns Hopkins University counseling center, Tyutyulkova has the ability to provide students with psychiatric therapy sessions, a service that is new to Salisbury University.

If you are seeking additional mental health services, the Student Affairs Center has partnered with Atlantic Physiological Practice. With supplementation of a student's insurance, the Student Affairs Center will pay up to \$50 a month in co-pays charges, if students wish to participate in more long-term treatment.

If you would like to participate in sessions of this nature, but do not want to go on the traditional route of therapy session, Caitlyn Edman and the Salisbury University volleyball team's formation of the Mindfulness Club is the route for you.

The Mindfulness Club was created to promote mindfulness through management strategies for decreasing stress or anxiety through everyday tasks, through techniques such as meditation and yoga.

"I can't even describe how helpful it has been for me in my life, especially with quarantine. Meditating and doing deep breathing almost every day has helped so much with handling stress," member Edman commented on the club's attributes.

The Mindfulness Club meets every other week on Zoom and participates in a variety of resilience building activities aiming to reframe a student's point of view and how one comprehends daily life situations. The club aims to promote a positive mindset to be applicable in any life situation, ultimately leading to the accomplishment of self-growth, mentally and physically.

"It helps with being aware of your emotions and your physical feelings ... it's one of the ways you can be kind to yourself and to your body through giving yourself a chance to breathe and focus on yourself because we all get so caught up in life," Edman stated.

Our educational, social and political environment is full of uncertainty and multitudes of stressors. Although we can get lost in the mix, it is more important than ever to keep up with your mental health.

Taking as little as five minutes out of your day to implement activities such as meditation, breathing exercises, going for a walk or journaling can have the ability to keep you in touch with your mental and physical emotional state.

"This is a unique time with so many unexpected stresses affecting people's employment and finances, combined with the incidents of violence that have occurred and disparities of racial injustice related to COVID-19 ... You might not know what's going on in someone else's life and how things are affecting them, so just be empathetic and compassionate to everyone," Harner stated.

It is more important now than ever to exercise compassion and empathy toward yourself, and toward members of your surrounding community. We must unify as an entity and work together to strive for equity and justice throughout all factions of our society.

We as individuals must work on our own mental affinities and strengthen ourselves as individuals to have the ability to codify a stand against the systemic injustices occurring throughout our country, and our world. Take care of yourself, so you'll be able to better take care of others.

The Counseling Center staff wants the student body to know that they are looking for student feedback and want to hear individuals' thoughts and ideas regarding the mental health services throughout campus. For more information on how to utilize the mental health services on campus, or to give feedback on the Counseling Center, email [counseling@salisbury.edu](mailto:counseling@salisbury.edu) or call (410)-543-6070.

To become a member of the Mindfulness Club, email [cedman1@gulls.salisbury.edu](mailto:cedman1@gulls.salisbury.edu) for more information.

## Hope is in our hands

By STEPHANIE RIVERA /  
Gull Life editor

The organization Best Buddies works in conjunction with adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities to form lifelong friendships, and advocates for a message of inclusion. Although the club has had to alter their traditional setup due to COVID-19, they are still formulating ways to participate while staying safe.

Best Buddies has monthly Zoom meetings on Wednesdays, and one Friday a month they will be holding two Zoom interactive events; the initial will be 10-10:30 a.m., the latter held from 2-2:30 p.m. Within the events, the members will interact with their buddies through a variety of activities such as playing games, watching a TV show, singing karaoke, creating arts and crafts and much more!

"It has been a challenge [the transition to Zoom], but we are excited to see how it goes," said President Megan Nau. "Over the summer, my officers and I sent all 60 plus buddies' letters in the mail with handmade cards and invitations to Zoom links to have summer events. However, lots of our buddies do not have access to the internet at home and did not know how to use Zoom ... [the director] generously allowed us to take a chunk out of their workday so they can have events with us via Zoom since they have a computer lab."

With COVID-19 altering the format of group meetings, the group is offering many ways of participation, so every student has the ability to contribute. Within the organization, there are two different types of buddies a student can be: an associate buddy or a peer buddy. Got a packed schedule but still want to be a member? When you join as an associate buddy, it is a less committed position that is formulated for the busier student. You have the ability to become a contributing member of the chapter through attendance of meetings and group activities, while holding a less committed position.

If you want to be an active member within the organization, then the peer buddy position is for you! Within, you make contact with your buddy once a week, in conjunction with one or two outings with your buddy per month. These outings can be done virtually or in person if you,

## BEST BUDDIES



Best buddies official Logo (photo courtesy of Best Buddy's International).

your buddy and their caretaker are comfortable with meeting.

Along with the opportunity to contribute to a global volunteer movement dedicated to the leadership development and inclusivity of people with developmental disabilities, you can win a variety of prizes just through your participation.

"We are giving our members incentives along the way for their participation! Active members will have the chance to win a gift card and be featured on our social media as member of the month," stated Nau.

You even have the ability to win amazing prizes solely through attending the monthly meeting. "We also have raffles at most meetings and all participants have the chance to win a Best Buddies t-shirt," Nau detailed.

Nau ensured that even if you have class during the meeting times, you can still be a participating member of the organization. Any individual on campus has the ability to become a member of this life-altering organization!

"What makes best buddies different is that anybody can join," said member Erin Stiffler. "You don't have to be good at sports or have a talent. It's just for kind people who want to be kind to others."

Stiffler detailed that she was inspired through

her aunts work within respite care, and how the exposure to her line of work inspired her to join the organization, "I want to become an occupational therapist, and many of my patients will be on the spectrum. So, this fits perfect with my goals in life."

Stiffler expressed the importance of Best Buddies, as being a member inspires her to become a better version of herself solely through her participation. She noted the importance of the organization during our current climate, as the need to formulate these social connections is continuously growing in essentialism.

"I think the club is essential whether or not COVID-19 is present, but it's even more so important we reach out to our buddies during this time."

The issues stemming from COVID-19 has proven to provide barriers for every person, but Nau's work within the organization since the pandemic proves that individuals with special needs are affected to the highest degree.

"Individuals with disabilities often lack resources to communicate, especially virtually. In hard times like this it is more important than ever to reach out and connect to them," Nau stated.

In times such as these, organizations that spread a message of inclusivity and acceptance are vital. The opportunities presented through participa-

Article continued on page 10 ...

## Hope is in our hands continued ...

tion within the groups grant individuals the ability to be a part of a growing movement of people dedicated to ensuring everyone has the opportunity to have a friend, regardless of mental disabilities.

Even if you do not plan to work with individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities after graduation, the exposure to this organization allows you to help these people grow and gain social skills throughout the variety of activities organized through Best Buddies. The work throughout will prove to provide life-lessons and fulfillment to both of buddies participating.

Nau's comments on the experience encapsulated the ideals most, "Best Buddies is a life-changing experience. I have been in it since my freshman year and now in my senior year as president, I can't imagine my future without it. It has given me a new perspective on life and has made me a better person."

The monumental work put into the organization by members such as Nau and Stiffler proved to be extraordinary, as this year the Best Buddies Salisbury chapter won the title of "College Chapter of the Year" throughout the entire state of Maryland.

Whether you are a peer buddy or an associate buddy, a half an hour out of your week translates to a lifetime of change for the members of the Best Buddies organization. Through their message of empowerment regarding self-advocacy and improvement of communicable skills, you have the ability to provide these individuals with necessary skills to assist their future employment, improving public speaking and transitioning into living in a more independent lifestyle.

The perspectives that both buddies can provide can prove to make each participating individual more empathetic, through providing each with a view into a world that neither would necessarily have exposure to. The dualistic empathy that the Best Buddies organization has possesses the ability to strengthen our community as a whole, and allows for people to be seen as people and not as categories.

Interested in changing a life? Do not hesitate to reach out and become a member of Best Buddies! Email Nau at mnau2@gulls.salisbury.edu or Vice President Allison Bahen at abahen1@gulls.salisbury.edu

## How Salisbury University Dining Services are coping with COVID-19

By STEPHANIE RIVERA and DAELYN FUNK / Gull Life editor and Staff writer

This pandemic hit everyone hard and we're all scrambling to find ways to cope, stay safe and still lead lives that resemble normality.

"I was initially nervous about coming onto campus after the COVID-19 pandemic hit, especially with having to go to commons," senior Cheyenne Gunther commented.

That idealism was a commonality throughout the entire student body, however with the carefully implemented measures through the actions of Salisbury University's Dining Services, students have the ability to dine with ease.

Responding to the altered living situations, SU Dining Services partnered with GrubHub to create an on-campus ordering system that makes getting food quicker, easier and safer for the campus population.

Throughout this partnership, students have the ability to order and pay for their food through the GrubHub app and have their meals ready to be picked up upon their arrival.

Owen Rosten, SU's director of Dining Services, was able to divulge into their post-COVID alterations, and provide an inside look at some

of the changes they've put in place. "Students' time is valuable," Rosten said. "Our whole motivation, through this apocalypse, was to find a way to be respectful and to be safe. And it motivated us to move our technology forward a lot faster than we might've had we not been faced with this situation." Before most of the students got back for the Fall 2020 Semester, SU had changed their system entirely: kiosks had been implemented, staff had been trained and menus had been changed. Rosten said that flexibility and ability to change so quickly is because "we work directly for the students, not for another company."

Due to the fact that SU doesn't filter its services through a third-party company, they were able to make these quick changes without going through the process of getting permission from overriding organizations.

When COVID-19 hit, Owen Rosten and his partner George Oakley set out to find a vendor partner with mobile app capabilities.

"GrubHub had name recognition and most of the students coming here already had that on their phone," Rosten said. "Students have enough burden ... we didn't want to do something that was not familiar to students, that they would have to learn new."

After GrubHub bought another system and integrated campus funds and dining dollars, it was a match made in heaven.

"With the GrubHub system, I feel much more at ease because I don't have to sit inside and close spaces waiting for my food to be finished," Gunther commented. "It decreases my chances of exposure to COVID-19, and ultimately helps everything run more efficiently."

But it wasn't always easy and there is still a variety of issues that continue to rise. They still had to train cashiers to work with a completely new system, get students to engage in the new system and Rosten worries that it might be taking away from the campus's sense of community.

"Right now, students have very little to do socially on campus except to eat," Rosten said. With the plethora of take-out options and the variety of challenges our country is facing, these implementations have the ability to assist students in the transition to living with COVID-19.

The end of the COVID-19 restrictions are seemingly nowhere in sight, the alterations of the SU Dining Services will likely span into the next semester and beyond. We have the ability to develop our sense of community through working cohesively to take active measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and the actions taken by SU Dining Services is just one of the many ways SU is providing safe and efficient methods of living throughout the pandemic.



Common services through COVID-19 precautions (staff photo by Summer Shaper).

**WANT TO WRITE FOR GULL LIFE?**  
**CONTACT STEPHANIE RIVERA**  
**srivera6@gulls.salisbury.edu**

## How SU is making political resources accessible to students

By TAYLOR DAVIS / Staff writer

If you don't know what Public Affairs and Civic Engagement is, it is a non-partisan center where students can acquire information about their community and government.

For 21 years, PACE has integrated civic and political engagement into Salisbury University's curriculum.

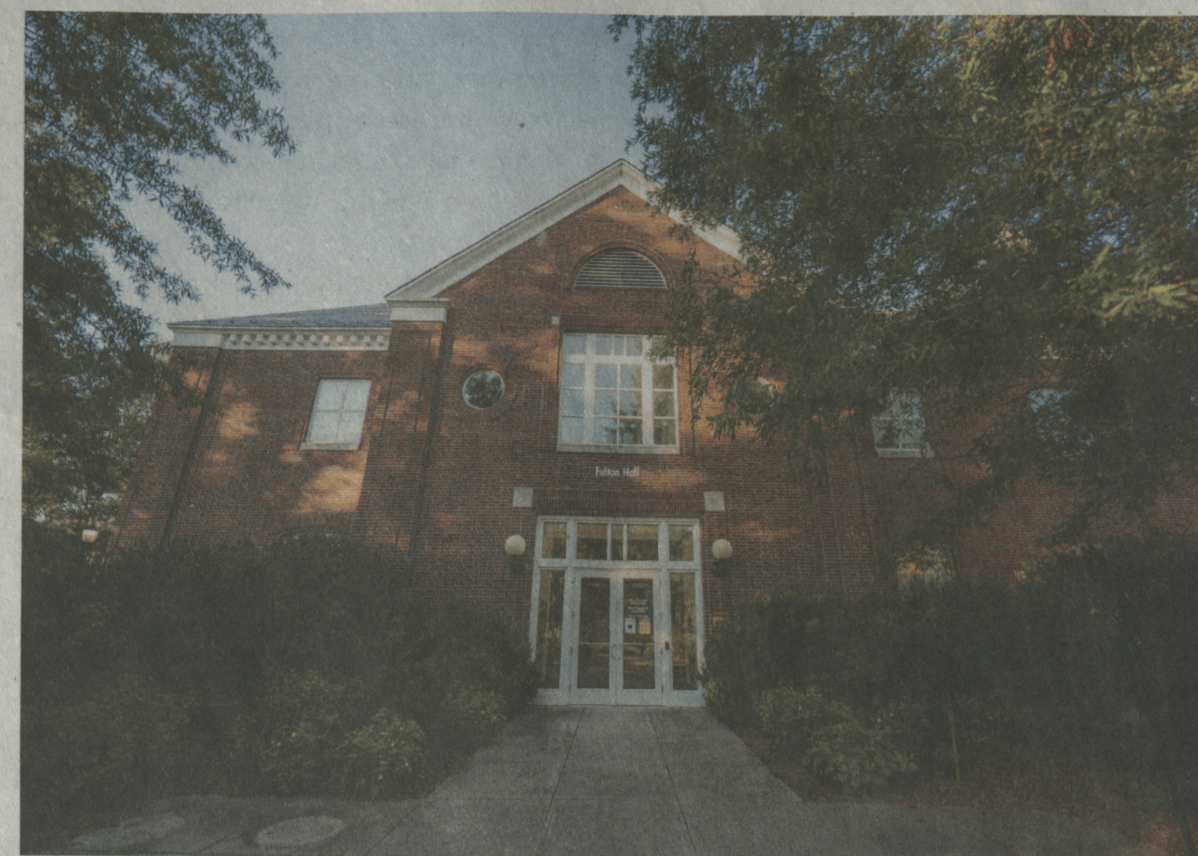
According to PACE Coordinator Michael Webber, data suggests that students become engaged in politics after taking a class with a civic engagement component.

Resources are available so that any student will be actively involved in their community, no matter their political background. PACE provides more than information on the presidential election as it also provides outlets and opportunities for political civic engagement.

Through PACE resources you can become actively involved within governmental institutions, and have your opinion heard through these governmental factions. PACE also provides information on upcoming elections, at the local and state level; throughout, you have the ability to vote on a variety of issues that affect your daily lives or have your opinion represented on legislative action regarding amendments, state representatives and local commissioners. Although voting can be troublesome for college students who go to an out-of-state university, can't return home during an election or live in a state where it is difficult to request a ballot. This is why PACE is an excellent resource for students to go to if they need guidance, and it is accessible.

"The more convenient you make it for people, the more they end up voting. Election day typically falls around midterms for most people. It's difficult to keep up with all the things they have to do to vote," Webber mentioned.

Webber also mentioned that PACE is capable of helping more students since the office is central-



Fulton Hall (staff photo by Ben Lausch).

ized. Having a place where all students feel comfortable coming to ask questions is important. For years it has been challenging to get students to participate in politics. It is not because students are uninterested, but they don't have time to commit to participating in exercising their civic right to participate within local, state and federal elections.

"Part of the mission of SU specifically and higher education generally is to promote and support informed and engaged democratic citizenship," Dr. Alexander Pope mentioned. "That happens best when there are resources available, not just programs that students can participate in, though we offer those as well, but spaces where all members of the campus community can think about and work on ideas or problems associated with citizenship."

PACE is the best place to find accurate information about the government and influences oth-

ers to have a dialogue about community issues. If you or someone else is still suffering from political apathy, it is crucial to remember politics does have an impact on your life.

"Young people are really impacted by the outcomes of elections. You'll be entering the workforce, buying homes, maybe starting families in a society that's shaped by what happens," Pope added.

I believe that political education is necessary to include on-campus since it determines how we manage our country's future, even if you don't think that every political decision you make for your community impacts your living standards. If you have any questions about how to get involved in your community, you can go to PACE's homepage for further information. <https://www.new.salisbury.edu/academic-offices/liberal-arts/pace/>

## Associate dean of students retires

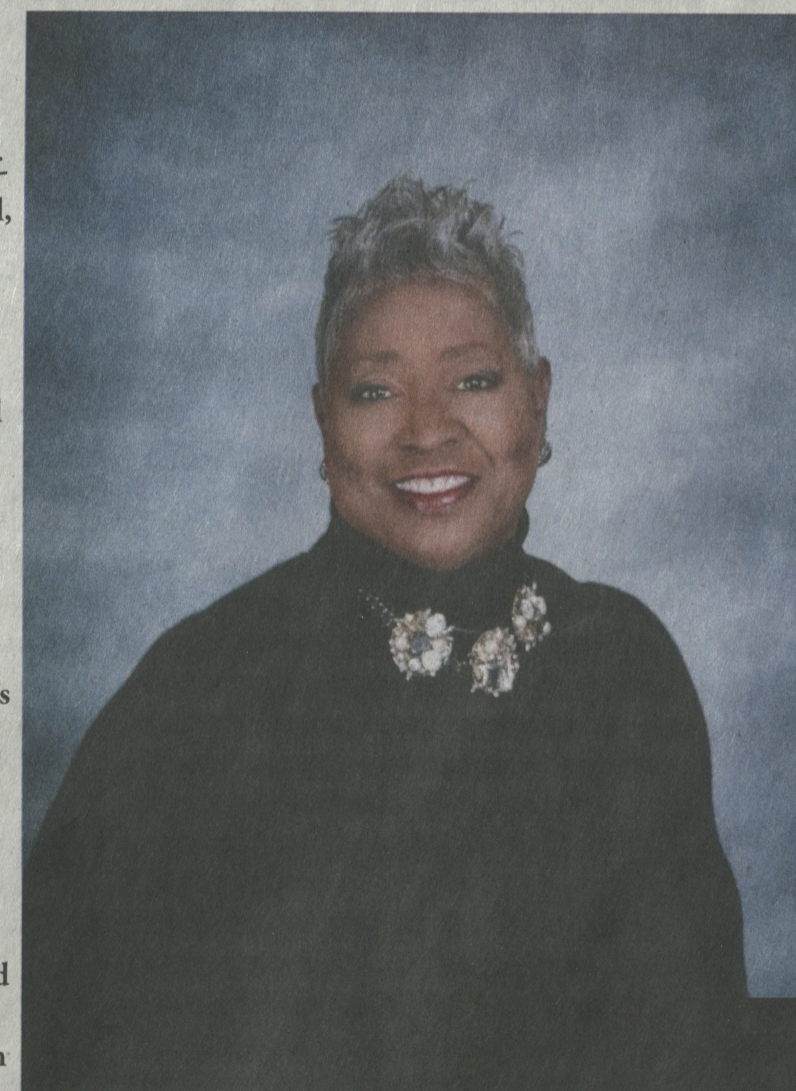
By LAURA AMRHEIN / Staff writer

After almost 32 years of working at Salisbury University, Dr. Lawanda Dockins-Mills is retiring. Dockins-Mills is the Associate Dean of Students for Student Affairs, the vice chair of Town-Gown council, the co-chair of Neighborhood Relations and the chair of Neighborhood Compact. She also oversees Sophomore Year Experience, Off Campus Housings Services, Neighborhood Relations Office, Technical and Event Services and is the director of the Guerrieri Student Union.

Dockins-Mills is an alumnus from Salisbury University, graduating with her bachelor's degree in communication arts with a concentration in broadcast journalism in 1982. She then went on to earn her master's degree from SU in 1996. Dockins-Mills went on to work at the university and is coming up on 32 years of work at SU, this coming February.

"When I was an undergraduate student at Salisbury, there was a promise of student union ... our student center was a little gold tin building, that was it. It did have a very small bookstore, snack bar, lounge ... when this [current] building, the Guerrieri Student Union, was getting ready to open ... in 1988, I applied and was a successful candidate hired as the assistant director for operations of the Guerrieri Student Union. That's how I started here [at the university]," Dockins-Mills said. Throughout her time at Salisbury University, the contributions that Dockins-Mills has made and the initiatives that she has started are numerous.

"Dockins-Mills' legacy includes the phenomenal growth of the SU Guerrieri Student Union, co-creating the origins of SU's Powerful Connections student retention program, spearhead-



Pictured is Dr. Dockins-Mills (Photo courtesy of Dockins-Mills).

ing the recent university census effort, leading the Sophomore Year Experience, creating welcoming spaces for commuter students and building strong relationships between the university and community residents and landlords," Dr. Wallace Southerland III, the associate vice president for Student Affairs stated.

In looking at her retirement, Dockins-Mills doesn't have a definite plan for what she will do but is sure to stay busy and continue to make a

difference in her community.

"I'm keeping my options open. I still feel like I have a lot to contribute ... making the decision to retire came with a lot of mixed emotions ... because I'm not retiring as most people think of it. I still have much to do, and so I have some dreams and aspirations, and so I am going to be exploring some of those things," Dockins-Mills said.

Dockins-Mills also plans to continue to be a presence in the Salisbury University community.

"I will still be connected, already I've been asked to do some things at the university, and so I will continue hopefully doing some other things still connected to my alma mater," said Dockins-Mills. Throughout her time here at SU, it is clear that Dockins-Mills had a passion for her job and thoroughly enjoyed it. "There is much that I have loved about my work at the university, and that is why it has been so difficult for me as I think about this transition in many ways because I still love what I do. I love interacting with students first and foremost, I love interacting with the community ... I love what I do," said Dockins-Mills.

According to Dockins-Mills, while she loved working with everyone from the community, her largest focus was on the students and her ability to make a difference in their lives.

"It's those things that don't even appear on your job description or your resume, it's those types of opportunities and interactions that I've had with students over the years that have made a difference in their lives, that is the meat of it for me," said Dockins-Mills.

Throughout her time at SU, Dockins-Mills maintained an open-door policy for students, in

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## Associate dean of students retires continued ...

which she always allowed students to talk with her. She even allowed for her staff to interrupt her in a meeting, if it appeared that the student needed her. By doing so, Dockins-Mills was able to form a multitude of relationships with students, who continue to visit her even after they graduated.

"Can I solve every problem? No. But I am going to give you as much information and as much support as I could over the years ... and that will probably be the primary piece that I am going to miss ... I'm [also] going to miss homecoming weekend, because over 32 years, I have built so many relationships with students over the years. When they come back for homecoming ... you're guaranteed that students are going to stop in and say hello," said Dockins-Mills.

While Dockins-Mills is aware that retirement is the right next step in her life, she emphasized how much she will miss her job at SU, the students, faculty and overall community.

"I'm going to miss Salisbury University, the students, the staff and faculty here that I have had the opportunity to work with, and I am also going to miss the community and all of the relationships that I've had the opportunity to form ... but I'm definitely going to miss the students the most," said Dockins-Mills.

Those who have had the opportunity to work with Dockins-Mills also are saddened by her retirement but are confident that her legacy and all that she has done for the university will live on.

"Her retirement will truly be a loss for the university, but her legacies remain intact, especially in the hearts of so many people she has touched with her kindness. I am so honored to call her [a] colleague and friend," said Wallace.

The University will miss Dockins-Mills and will be sure to take active measures to continue her revolutionary legacy.

## Greek life organizations adapt to COVID-19

By ALLISON GUY / Editor-in-chief

For many students, fraternities and sororities are a staple of the college experience. They provide the opportunity to take part in exclusive events and allow members to make connections they may not otherwise have made.

But even these Greek life organizations, which have been around in America for more than a century, are not immune to the effects of this year's COVID-19 pandemic.

Salisbury University's fraternities and sororities have had to find creative ways to adapt to a world in which there is a disease traveling across the globe, a world in which face masks and social distancing are the norm and a world that everyone is doing their best to cope with.

Hannah Cleary, a junior and the public relations chair of Delta Gamma, expressed the struggle that Greek life organizations are currently going through due to COVID-19: "I feel like frat and sorority life as a whole ... is all kind of a little bit struggling just because we can't meet due to capacity issues because everything is over Zoom."

Besides holding weekly meetings over Zoom, the sisters of Delta Gamma created point teams where if the team members take certain actions, they will gain points. These actions are both virtual and in-person — for example, hanging out with a sister over Zoom or going to the library. Members of Delta Gamma are also encouraged to check in on one another.

"I know that our sorority as a whole just tries to encourage checking in on each other cause it [dealing with COVID-19] can be hard," Cleary explained.

For sophomore Carleigh Stokes, director of merchandise and public relations for sorority Alpha Sigma Tau, her group initially struggled to adapt to COVID-19.

"So it's definitely been a challenge at first. Obviously, we could've never seen something like this coming, and so it was really hard when it initially happened," Stokes said.

Alpha Sigma Tau's members are participating in both online and in-person events. One in-person event was a socially distanced scavenger hunt around Salisbury.

"It's something that we probably would've never had the idea to do if it weren't for COVID," Stokes said.

In addition to holding their events, the sisters of Alpha Sigma Tau recognize one another for their accomplishments, despite the social distance between them.

"We do a lot of things just to like give sisters some recognition within our chapter because it's kind of hard when you're not in person ... Like, if you have classes with your sisters, they can't like see your accomplishments face-to-face, so ... we've been trying to like recognize sisters on the side," Stokes explained.

SU's fraternities have also had to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senior Michael Ward, president of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. and treasurer for the National Pan-Hellenic Council, expressed the shift to virtual events that resulted from the pandemic.

"Times where we usually meet people in person, we meet them over Zoom. Most of our events are through Zoom ... I think we've had one in-person event," Ward explained.

Senior and Alpha Sigma Phi President Tim Jakubek is in a similar situation. He explained that his fraternity has had to transition to online meetings and other events.

"Everyone got together in person, and we've been doing that over Zoom now. We conducted interviews over Zoom and we're going to have elections next week over Zoom," Jakubek stated.

One pandemic-related difficulty Jakubek has faced is getting to know members of the fraternity he is a part of.

"Like, you've gotta get these kids to commit to you, and you as a chapter have to commit to them without really getting to know them all that well," Jakubek commented.

Though this pandemic hasn't been easy, it has brought out creativity and resiliency in the members of the SU community, including Greek life organizations.

While COVID-19 is here to stay, remember to stay safe, wash your hands and look to SU's organizations as an example — even though it may be harder to keep in touch with those you care about, it can be done safely and even in a fun way.

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